

# Reflective Practice towards Professional Development of Teachers

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**KLJUČNE BESEDE:** aktivnost, refleksija, sodelovanje, strokovni razvoj, učitelji razrednega pouka

**POVZETEK** – Strokovni razvoj učiteljev razrednega pouka je sestavni del zasnove šolskega učnega načrta. Spremenjene oblike strokovnega razvoja so postale nujne zaradi hitrih sprememb v znanosti in tehnologiji ter novih spoznanj o načinih učenja učencev in njihovih potrebah. Refleksivna praksa kot sodobna oblika strokovnega izpopolnjevanja učiteljev si prizadeva za preoblikovanje znanja, ki se zgodi, če so udeleženci aktivni, uporabljajo dialog in sodelujejo v timu strokovnjakov. Namen raziskave je bil preučiti mnenja in stališča učiteljev razrednega pouka o refleksivni praksi kot sestavnem delu strokovnega razvoja in vseživljenjskega učenja. Udeleženci raziskave so bili učitelji razrednega pouka iz Republike Hrvaške, ki so se med seboj razlikovali po delovnih izkušnjah in statusu v stroki ter napredovanju. Rezultati kažejo, da je refleksivna praksa priložnost za izboljšanje tradicionalnih oblik strokovnega razvoja učiteljev, ki jih lahko spodbudi k novim načinom vseživljenjskega učenja in bogatenja šolskega učnega načrta.

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**KEYWORDS:** activity, professional development, reflection, cooperation, primary school teachers

**ABSTRACT** – The professional development of primary school teachers is an integral part of the school curriculum design. Changed forms of professional development appear as a necessity due to the rapid changes in science and technology, and the new knowledge about how students learn and about their needs. Reflective practice as a modern form of teachers' professional development strives for the transformation of knowledge that occurs if participants are active, use dialogue, and cooperate in a team of experts. The aim of the research was to examine the opinions and attitudes of primary school teachers about reflective practice as an integral part of professional development and lifelong learning. The participants in the research were primary school teachers from the Republic of Croatia, with different work experience, and status and promotion in the profession. The results indicate that reflective practice is an opportunity to improve the traditional forms of professional development of teachers and can encourage them in new ways of lifelong learning and enrichment of the school curriculum.

## 1 Introduction

Primary school teachers in the Republic of Croatia have the obligation of continuing their professional development in accordance with the curriculum issued by the Ministry of Science and Education (Education in Primary and Secondary Schools Act, 2020). Professional development of teachers means learning to improve educational work (State Pedagogical Standard of the Primary Education System, 2008). Promotion to the title (mentor, advisor) is regulated by the Ordinance on the Promotion of Teachers, Professional Associates and Principals in Primary and Secondary Schools and Dormitories (2021).

Traditional forms of professional development, which are usually implemented, include the occasional participation of teachers in workshops, seminars, professional

gatherings or lectures. The topics of such forms of training can, but do not have to be the subject of their interest, or do not have to arouse the interest of teachers at all, as Miljak (2009) emphasizes; nor involve the application of new knowledge to the development of existing practice. Slunjski (2012) thinks similarly, emphasizing that these forms of training occur spontaneously, occasionally in different places, are not related to the space or time in which pedagogical practice occurs, and therefore are often not applicable.

The professional development of teachers in the traditional approach is understood instrumentally and is used to find quick solutions in the globalizing world of educational competition for the fastest possible learning outcomes. The emphasis is often on technical development, which may limit the nature of learning to achieve desirable outcomes instead of encouraging teachers to perceive the conditions in which they can work and which affect the nature of their work (Hardy and Rönnerman, 2011). When in-service training is geared to acting on teachers rather than working with them, it threatens to increase teachers' dependence on outside help because it has the characteristics of a hardly effective proactive approach. In the traditional approach to professional development, teachers are assessed as defined experts, dependent on external collaborators who transfer knowledge (knowledge transmission).

According to the National Framework Curriculum (2010), the new competencies that teachers need to develop emphasize creativity, innovation, problem solving, entrepreneurship, IT literacy, critical thinking development, dialogue, teamwork and collaboration. The modern approach to in-service teacher training should strive for a constructivist paradigm of knowledge acquisition (Vygotsky, 1987), which presupposes the activity of participants, a stimulating environment, or constant support they need to have in order to learn and develop professionally.

Reflective practice implies the active participation of all interested participants because it is not carried out on people but with people (Bognar, 2009), and the modern approach to understanding professional development relies on the participation and active building of knowledge of all participants (Salo and Rönnerman, 2013). The active participation of participants should enhance a sense of belonging and togetherness. In addition to participant activities, in recent literature dealing with the analysis of reflective practice (Razdevšek Pučko, 1996; Šagud, 2006; Mac Naughton and Hughes, 2009; Slunjski, 2012; Mlinarević, 2014; Rönnerman and Salo, 2014; Rönnerman and Edwards-Groves, 2015; Bognar, 2016; Zupančič and Krajncan, 2019) a supportive environment, positive relationships, open thinking, joint learning, interaction and communication are pointed out.

Glasswell and Ryan (2017) state that in the relevant scientific and professional literature, researchers equally use terms such as reflective practitioner, reflection, reflective process, and reflective pedagogical practice to define reflection processes. According to the above-mentioned authors, reflective practice includes conscious activity, looking backwards, metaphorically speaking, which implies awareness and interpretation of many segments of knowledge, problems, course of action and results. Guðjónsdóttir et al. (2017) explain how critical reflection is the ability of teachers to reflect on their pedagogical practice, review it, systematically evaluate it, and make decisions on how to act. Powel and Bodur (2019), in addition to the already mentioned features of the re-

flective process, state the intentionality and systematicity in the examination of teaching and learning in order to improve the practice and learning outcomes of students.

This research is in a way a preparatory study for the effective implementation of modern forms of professional development of teachers. It shows teachers' attitudes about reflective experiences and their recommendations for the future organization of reflective practicums to prevent bad experiences and motivate teachers to develop and change.

## **2 Research methodology**

### *2.1 Aim and hypothesis of the research*

The aim of the research was to examine the opinions and attitudes of primary school teachers about reflective practice as an integral part of professional development and lifelong learning. In accordance with the stated goal of the research, the following hypotheses were set:

- H1. Modern teachers are ready to switch from the paradigm of teaching (transmission of knowledge) to the concept of active learning (construction of knowledge).
- H2. Teachers have constructive recommendations for the future organization of professional development as a concept of active, collaborative learning.

### *2.2 Research participants*

The survey was conducted during May 2021. There were 127 primary school teachers from the Republic of Croatia who participated in the research.

### *2.3 Research instrument*

A questionnaire which consisted of seventeen questions divided into three parts. The first part of the questionnaire referred to the sociodemographic data of the respondents; the second part examined the attitudes of teachers about reflective experiences; the third part referred to the opinions and attitudes of teachers about the future plan of practising reflective practice. The questionnaire was available in digital form, was anonymous, and was filled in voluntarily by the respondents.

### *2.4 Research results*

#### *Sociodemographic data*

The research was conducted with a total of 127 primary school teachers in the Republic of Croatia. 4 male participants (3.2%) and 123 female participants (96.8%) participated in the study.

The participation of teachers according to work experience is shown in Table 1, which shows the highest response of teachers, i.e., 59 (40.9%), who have 21 to 30 years of work experience, and the lowest, i.e., 7 teachers (5.5%) with 6 up to 10 years of service.

**Table 1**

*Number of primary school teachers by years of service*

<i>Years of service</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
up to 5 yrs.	11	8.7%
6–10 yrs.	7	5.5%
11–20 yrs.	29	22.8%
21–30 yrs.	52	40.9%
30 years or more	28	22%
Total sum	127	100%

According to the status in their title, most teachers (61.4%) are not in the process of promotion, which can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Number of teachers by position*

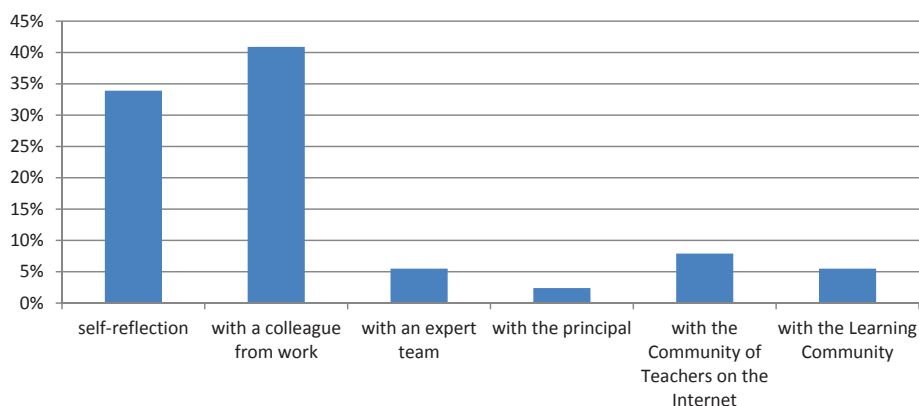
<i>Teacher by position</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Trainee teacher	6	5.2%
Teacher	78	61.4%
Teacher mentor	20	15.7%
Teacher advisor	20	15.7%
Teacher an excellent advisor	3	2.4%
Total sum	127	100%

#### *Descriptive statistics of selected dimensions of examined variables*

Data from the second group of questions were selected, in which the attitudes and opinions of primary school teachers about reflective practice were investigated. When asked about the ways of practising reflective practice, the respondents answered (40.9%) that they mostly practise reflection with colleagues from work, and perform self-reflection (33.90%), which is shown in Graph 1.

### Graph 1

#### *How teachers practise reflection*

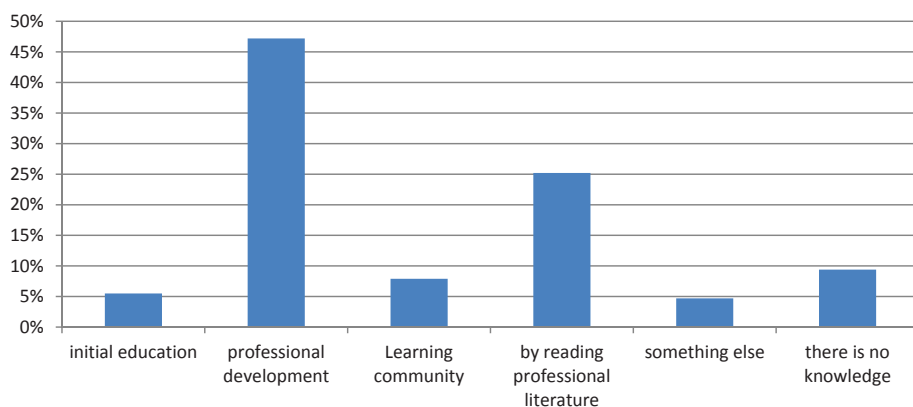


When asked about the methods of practising reflective practice, 8 respondents (6.3%) stated that they write a review of the pros and cons of the lesson, i.e., conduct self-reflection; 48 respondents (40.9%) review the lesson in a conversation with students; 56 respondents (44.1%) review the lesson in a conversation with colleagues; 6 respondents (4.7%) review the lesson in a conversation with a professional team; 4 respondents (3.1%) review the work performed in a conversation with colleagues involved in learning communities; 5 respondents (3.9%) practise something else.

Most respondents (47.2%) acquired knowledge about reflective practice during professional development, which can be seen in Graph 2.

### Graph 2

#### *Knowledge of primary school teachers about reflective practice*



Most respondents (38.6%) cite the acquisition of new knowledge, skills and competencies as an advantage of professional development through reflection, and 24.4%

mention the view of educational practice from different perspectives. Most respondents (29.1%) cite the experts' different systems of life values as obstacles; 18.9% of respondents cite the fear of negative evaluation; 10.2% of respondents cite discomfort caused by public exposure; 8.7% of respondents cite lack of trust in experts and 8.7% of respondents fear of the professional team's reaction (e.g., pedagogue, psychologist).

When asked about unpleasant experiences in relation to work colleagues during reflective practicums, respondents had the option of choosing from multiple choices. The results show that the majority of respondents (50.4%) experienced gossip and that 35.4% ignored the achievements of experts or members of the expert team.

Most of the respondents (34.6%) consider the school professional team to be the most responsible for the implementation of reflective practice; 30.7% of respondents think that teachers are personally responsible; 8.7% of respondents answered that the principal is responsible.

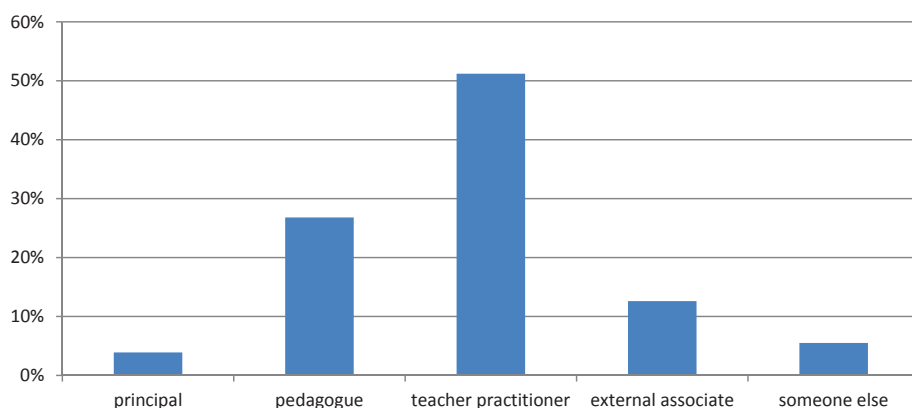
When asked about the outcomes of practising reflective teaching practice in the school where the respondents work, 41.7% of respondents answered that primary school teachers practise reflective practice, while 58.3% of respondents answered that reflective teaching practice is not practised in the school in which they work.

The third group of questions surveyed the attitudes and opinions of primary school teachers about the plan for the future regarding the organization of reflective workshops in schools. Most respondents (86.6%) express satisfaction and willingness to participate, while 13.4% of respondents are not ready.

Graph 3 shows the teachers' opinions about the future management of reflective practicums in school. Most teachers (51.2%) believe that the leader should be a practising teacher from their team.

### Graph 3

*Teachers' opinions about conducting reflective practicums*

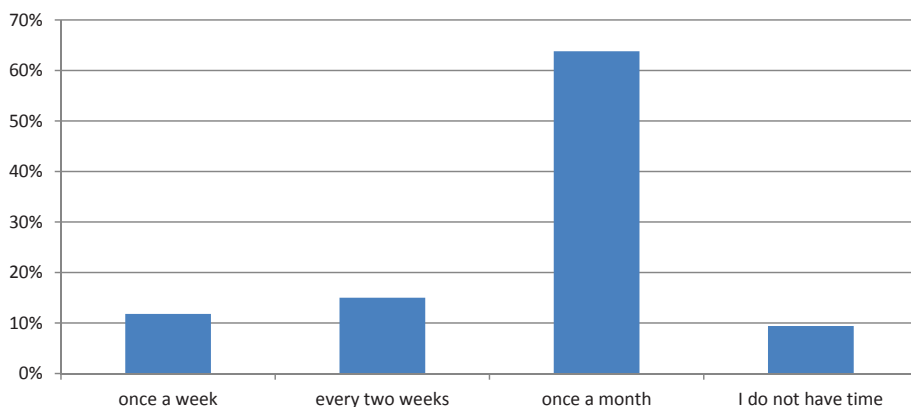


When asked about how to effectively improve knowledge about reflective teaching practice, most respondents (41.7%) prefer thematic workshops and 31.5% of respondents prefer modular education organized by the school.

Graph 4 shows the approximate timing of the organization of reflective practice among primary school teachers, where it can be seen that most respondents (63.8%) suggest organizing reflective practicums continuously once a month.

#### Graph 4

*Time of organizing reflective practicums*



When asked about choosing the content of reflections, i.e., the topic that teachers will deal with, most respondents (73.2%) estimate that the topics should be determined jointly by the teachers themselves, i.e., by the reflective practitioners who participate in the reflections. The results of the research did not show a statistically significant difference among research participants in their attitudes towards reflection in relation to gender, amount of work experience, and status or promotion in the profession.

### 3 Discussion

The relevance of the research is manifested in the need to seek new forms of professional development of primary school teachers, which is conditioned by rapid changes in science and technology, and the new knowledge about how children learn and about their needs. The school curriculum must take care of the needs and interests of students and prepare them for their contribution to the development of society (Igwebuike, 2014). The educational system is slowly adapting to these needs and primary school teachers, as important components of the system, expect support in their professional development from the school itself (principal, professional team), the Ministry of Science and Education, and the Agency for Education.

The results of the research show that more than half of the research participants (58.3%) still do not implement reflective practice. Igwebuike (2014) lists factors that hinder innovation, such as: insufficient financial incentives; ignorance of the relevant theory and unwillingness to face it; poor organization within the school; poor information about the goals and methods of innovation; conservatism of teachers who feel

threatened by change and innovation, and strive for the status quo. However, social life is characterized by change; society is dynamic and education is a means of preparing an individual for social life, that is, the constant changes that occur in various aspects. As a result of change, new approaches, practices and processes are emerging. Goodson (2014) points out that when curriculum change starts from the teacher, then external changes also occur; consequently, goodwill, a sense of purpose and passion on the part of the teacher can be assumed. It is encouraging that out of the total number of research participants, 86.6% express satisfaction with the possibility of participating in reflective workshops as a way of professional development. Teachers have a need to reflect and analyse their experiences, examine their values and pedagogical practice.

Teachers answered that they mostly practice reflection with colleagues from work and perform self-reflection. Thus, reflection can occur in groups as professional learning communities or individually as self-reflection (Powel and Bodur, 2019).

Undoubtedly, teachers appreciate opportunities to think together with colleagues, but they lack the experience to realize what it means to be reflective. Teachers mostly associate the experience of reflection with the conversation about teaching practice that they conducted with their colleagues, co-workers at school. Reflection involves conversation and discussion among participants that seek to reconstruct the meaning of specific situations and create a foundation for revising the plan (Mac Naughton and Hughes, 2009). Conversation reveals how an individual thinks, it expresses feelings and values. According to Senese (2017), interviews with co-workers ensure that teachers listen to each other, work in a team, and respect different perspectives. Reflective dialogue is creative, caring, and critical (Helleve, 2010), but reflection is much more than conversation. It includes thinking, reviewing, systematically evaluating, and making decisions about new activities.

Teachers also identify reflection with the evaluation of a lesson, and as a method of reflection they cite conversations with students who consider themselves participants in reflection. Evaluation is an important element of the curriculum and Igwebuike (2014) states the reasons why evaluation is necessary for individual participants, and emphasizes it in their work. It helps to determine the progress and development of students, motivate students, and diagnose their strengths and weaknesses in school activities. Evaluation also helps to determine the strengths and weaknesses of teachers but should not be equated with reflection. Mac Naughton and Hughes (2009) state that reflection has an evaluative aspect; it allows questioning and creating a clearer picture of life and work in a specific situation and the obstacles that arise, and assumptions about what else could have been done. Evaluation and critical reflection are certainly an integral part of the learning process, but they are two different concepts that involve different activities. Evaluation determines the value of an activity, and reflection raises awareness and interprets the activities, problems, course of action and results.

As the most effective form of acquiring knowledge about reflective practice in the future, teachers mentioned the organization of workshops, professional meetings and lectures. In these forms of professional development, the transmission of knowledge from the organizer to the participants prevails. Modern forms of professional development strive for the transformation of knowledge that occurs if participants are active, use dialogue, and collaborate in a team of experts. Organizing reflective practicums and giving teachers the opportunity to reflect on their professional work would raise aware-



ness of the values on which they build their professional practice, and prevent one of the most common obstacles mentioned in the research (experts' different systems of life values, mentioned by 29.1 % of surveyed teachers). Perhaps it would also reduce the negative climate in the school caused by the undesirable behaviours of colleagues (gossip, cited by 39.4 % of teachers). Rönnerman and Salo (2014) cite positive relationships among members and an atmosphere of trust and respect as prerequisites for conducting collaborative reflections.

Agreed rules clearly define desirable behaviours and a clear distribution of roles and functions representing the assumptions of constructive work (Mlinarević et al., 2003).

Organizing reflective practicums in schools would provide teachers with a continuous place and time (63.8 % of teachers prefer once a month) to clarify attitudes towards personal practice, and the attitudes and values on which it is built. Teachers need time to develop, master, and reflect on learning approaches; they should be provided with sufficient opportunities to engage in activities, collaborate with peers, exchange ideas, provide and receive information, and critically review work (Vrasidas and Glass, 2007).

Rönnerman and Salo (2014) emphasize the need for the time continuity of professional development within the school. Quality professional development requires systematic collection of documentation from pedagogical practice, reflections, and time. When they have enough time, teachers can critically reflect, discuss, and understand their own practice and pedagogical action (Salo and Rönnerman, 2013).

Šagud (2006) emphasizes the need to emancipate new forms of professional development that would enable a better understanding, connection, and exploitation of abstract theoretical knowledge with situations arising from direct professional practice. Reflective practicums would also enable teachers to start their personal development from personal problems in practice (which is preferred by 73.2 % of respondents). Critical reflection involves individual interpretation and reinterpretation of personal practice; it implies careful, thoughtful, considerate, prudent and selfless action. In this way, reflection participants become curious and open-minded about their daily educational practice and, using hermeneutic reasoning, wisely interpret practice and work to increase the wisdom of their daily practice (Mac Naughton and Hughes, 2009). Reflection can help teachers become aware of the moral, ethical and political aspects embedded in everyday practice; it improves teachers' practice but also the professional development of the community. Glasswell and Ryan (2017) interpret reflection as a highly personalized cognitive and metacognitive activity, but also as a social activity. Reflection must include the exploration of personal and social values without which judgment and action have no clear direction. According to the mentioned authors, reflection is a process that includes cooperation and systematic evaluation of experience, which leads to adaptation and empowered action.

The research also highlighted the problem of conducting reflective practicums. The results indicate that the respondents list their expert colleagues as the most desirable leaders of reflective practicums. In the literature (Erčulj and Škodnik, 2013; Rönnerman and Salo, 2014; Rönnerman and Edwards-Groves, 2015), experts from the faculty are proposed as leaders of reflective practicums as external associates, pedagogues, etc. According to Bogнар (2000), the leader should organize the discussion so that other

participants experience it as useful and enjoyable without excessive criticism, attack, or evaluation, taking into account the individual differences that exist among participants in their collaborative and communication skills.

Šagud (2006) thinks similarly, emphasizing that reflection is a collegial discourse in which participants are enabled to assume, check, err, correct, or independently and socially construct their pedagogical knowledge. Quality leadership should be focused on developing relationships, strengthening partnerships, developing a learning team (Slunjski, 2018). It includes a decision-making activity for the joint achievement of goals; motivation of participants; communication; social relations; cooperation; and a common vision. Successful leadership has a positive effect on participants, making them contribute willingly and enthusiastically to the achievement of goals. Leadership can be important for practitioners to discover personal thoughts, challenge theories, and share experiences with colleagues, which can contribute to increased self-confidence and the awareness that different knowledge is encountered and used in the development of practice (Rönnerman, 2015).

The conducted research confirmed that teachers are ready to switch to active, collaborative learning, which is a feature of reflective practice; that they have positive attitudes towards reflective practice and constructive recommendations for its future organization.

## **4 Conclusion**

This research sought to find out whether modern teachers are ready to switch from the teaching paradigm (knowledge transmission) for which they were trained until recently, to the concept of active learning (knowledge construction), or whether the former paradigm is still a basic feature of the Croatian learning and teaching culture.

The research was aimed at questioning teachers' opinions about the peculiar nature of the context for professional learning and development by engaging in reflective practicums. The results of the research highlighted the importance of cooperation, conversations with experts, evaluation of teaching practice, colleagues as leaders of reflective workshops, and analysis of personal problems as elements of the future organization of reflective workshops. The need to reflect and analyse experiences, examining the values and pedagogical practice of teachers, encourages the organization of reflective practicums in the future, and provides opportunities for teachers to reflect on their professional work. Those who need to support teacher reflections are invited to critically consider how to support an environment conducive to sustainable and transformative learning. A research approach to in-service training would enable teachers to jointly discover and create (transform knowledge) rather than transfer existing knowledge (knowledge transmission).

The research has improved the area of teachers' professional development with empirical evidence that contributes to the design and implementation of their professional development through continuous discussions in reflective practicums.

The results of the research are a contribution to and incentive for changes in the school curriculum, as well as an incentive for scientists to conduct further research in this area.

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## **Refleksija v izpopolnjevanju učiteljev refleksivne prakse**

*Strokovni razvoj učiteljev razrednega pouka je sestavni del oblikovanja šolskega učnega načrta. Odraža se v celotnem kontekstu, v katerem je učni načrt sestavljen, oblikovan in izvajan. Učitelji razrednega pouka v Republiki Hrvaški se morajo trajnostno strokovno izpopolnjevati v skladu z učnim načrtom, ki ga sprejme Ministrstvo za znanost in izobraževanje. Strokovno izpopolnjevanje oziroma trajnostno strokovno napredovanje učiteljev pomeni učenje z namenom izboljšanja izobraževalnega dela.*

*Tradicionalne oblike strokovnega razvoja, ki se večinoma izvajajo, vključujejo občasno udeležbo učiteljev na delavnicah, seminarjih, strokovnih srečanjih ali predavanjih. Teme tovrstnih oblik izpopolnjevanja so lahko ali pa tudi ne predmet zanimanja učiteljev oziroma včasih sploh ne spodbujajo njihovega zanimanja ali uporabe novih znanj za razvoj obstoječe prakse. Te oblike izpopolnjevanja niso povezane niti s prostorom niti s časom, v katerem poteka pedagoška praksa, zaradi česar pogosto niso uporabne. Strokovni razvoj učiteljev v tradicionalnem pristopu se dojema instrumentalno in se uporablja za iskanje hitrih rešitev v globalizirajočem se svetu izobraževalnega tekmovanja za čim hitrejše učne izide. Spremenjene oblike poklicnega razvoja se zdijo nujne zaradi hitrih sprememb v znanosti in tehnologiji ter novih spoznanj o načinih učenja učencev in njihovih potrebah. Šolski učni načrt mora upoštevati potrebe in interese učencev ter jih pripraviti na njihov prispevek k razvoju družbe. Izobraževalni sistem se počasi prilagaja novim potrebam učencev, učitelji razrednega pouka pa kot pomembna komponenta sistema pričakujejo pri svojem poklicnem razvoju podporo same šole (ravnatelja, strokovnega tima), Ministrstva za znanost in izobraževanje ter Agencije za vzgojo in izobraževanje.*

*Refleksivna praksa kot sodobna oblika strokovnega razvoja učiteljev razrednega pouka si prizadeva za transformacijo znanja, do katere pride, če so udeleženci aktivni, uporabljajo dialog, sodelujejo v timu strokovnjakov in se ukvarjajo z vprašanji iz lastne prakse. Refleksivna praksa vključuje aktivno udeležbo vseh zainteresiranih udeležencev, podporo okolja, pozitivne odnose udeležencev, odprto razmišljanje, skupno učenje, interakcijo in komunikacijo. Konstruktivistična paradigma pridobivanja znanja, ki jo podpiramo v tem prispevku, predpostavlja aktivnost udeležencev, spodbudno okolje oziroma trajnostno podporo, ki jo učitelji morajo imeti, da bi se lahko učili in strokovno izpopolnjevali.*

*Namen raziskave je bil preučiti mnenja in stališča učiteljev razrednega pouka o refleksivni praksi kot sestavnem delu poklicnega razvoja in vseživljenjskega učenja. Raziskava je bila izvedena leta 2021. V njej je sodelovalo 127 učiteljev razrednega pouka iz celotne Republike Hrvaške. Za namen raziskave je bil izdelan vprašalnik, ki je vseboval sedemnajst vprašanj, razdeljenih na tri dele. Prvi del vprašalnika se je nana-*

šal na sociodemografske podatke anketirancev, drugi del je preučeval stališča učiteljev do refleksivnih izkušenj, tretji del pa se je nanašal na mnenja in stališča učiteljev o prihodnjem načrtu izvajanja refleksivne prakse. Vprašalnik je bil na voljo v digitalni obliki, anonimen in so ga anketiranci izpolnjevali prostovoljno.

Raziskava je bila namenjena preizpraševanju stališč učiteljev o posebnosti konteksta za poklicno učenje in razvoj z vključitvijo v refleksivne praktikume. Učitelji morajo razmišljati in analizirati svoje izkušnje, preučevati svoje vrednote in pedagoško prakso. Izvedena raziskava je potrdila, da so učitelji pripravljeni preiti na aktivno, sodelovalno učenje, ki je značilnost refleksivne prakse, imajo pozitiven odnos do uvajanja refleksivne prakse in dajejo konstruktivna priporočila za njeno prihodnjo organizacijo. Učitelji nedvomno cenijo priložnost, da razmišljajo skupaj s kolegi, vendar jim primanjkuje izkušenj, da bi spoznali, kaj pomeni biti refleksiven. Rezultati raziskave so izpostavili pomen sodelovanja, pogovorov s strokovnjaki, vrednotenja pedagoške prakse, sodelavcev kot vodij refleksivnih praktikumov in analize osebnih problemov kot elementov prihodnje organizacije refleksivnih praktikumov. Natančneje, učitelji izkušnjo refleksije najpogosteje povezujejo s pogovorom o pedagoški praksi, ki ga izvajajo s kolegi iz službe. Pogovori s sodelavci zagotavljajo, da se učitelji med seboj poslušajo, delajo v timu in spoštujejo različne perspektive. Vendar, refleksija je veliko več kot pogovor, saj zajema razmišljanje, preizpraševanje, sistematično vrednotenje in sprejemanje odločitev o novih aktivnostih.

Učitelji refleksijo enačijo tudi z evalvacijo pouka. Refleksija ima evalvacijski vidik, saj omogoča preizpraševanje in ustvarjanje jasnejše slike življenja in dela v konkretni situaciji ter nastajajočih ovir in domnev, kaj bi še lahko naredili. Vrednotenje in kritična refleksija sta vsekakor sestavni del učnega procesa, ampak sta to dva različna pojma, ki vključujeta različne aktivnosti. Evalvacija določa vrednost določene aktivnosti, refleksija pa osvešča in interpretira aktivnosti, probleme, potek in rezultate določene aktivnosti.

Kot najučinkovitejše oblike pridobivanja znanja o refleksivni praksi v prihodnosti so učitelji navedli delavnice, strokovna srečanja in predavanja. Vendar pri omenjenih oblikah strokovnega razvoja prevladuje prenos znanja z organizatorjev na udeležence. Sodobne oblike strokovnega razvoja težijo k preoblikovanju znanja, ki se zgodi, če so udeleženci aktivni, uporabljajo dialog in sodelujejo v skupini strokovnjakov. Z organizacijo refleksivnih praktikumov in omogočanjem tega, da bi učitelji razmišljali o svojem poklicnem delu, bi dvignili zavest o vrednotah, na katerih gradijo svojo poklicno prakso, in odstranili eno najpogostejših ovir, omenjeno v raziskavi, to so različni življenjski vrednostni sistemi kolegov strokovnjakov, in zmanjšali negativno ozračje v šoli, ki ga povzroča nezaželeno vedenje kolegov. Organiziranje refleksivnih praktikumov v šolah bi učiteljem zagotovilo stalno mesto in čas za razjasnitev odnosa do osebne prakse, stališč in vrednot, na katerih le-ta temelji. Učitelji potrebujejo čas za razvoj, obvladovanje in razmišljanje o učnih pristopih, dati jim je treba dovolj priložnosti, da se vključijo v aktivnosti, sodelujejo s kolegi strokovnjaki, izmenjujejo ideje, dajejo in prejema informacije ter kritično ocenjujejo delo. Refleksivni praktikumi bi učiteljem omogočili tudi, da pri svojem poklicnem razvoju izhajajo iz osebnih težav v praksi. Refleksija lahko pomaga učiteljem, da se zavedajo moralnih, etičnih in političnih vidikov, ki so vpeti v vsakodnevno prakso, kar lahko izboljša učiteljsko prakso, pa tudi strokovni razvoj skupnosti.

*Raziskava je izpostavila tudi problem izvajanja refleksivnih praktikumov. Rezultati kažejo, da anketiranci kot najbolj zaželeno vodje refleksivnih praktikumov navajajo svoje sodelavce, strokovnjake. Kakovostno vodenje naj bi bilo usmerjeno v razvoj odnosov, krepitev partnerstev in razvoj učečega tima, saj zajema odločanje za skupno doseganje ciljev, motiviranje udeležencev, komunikacijo, socialne odnose, sodelovanje in skupno vizijo. Uspešno vodenje pozitivno vpliva na udeležence, da voljno in zavzeto prispevajo k doseganju ciljev.*

*Tisti, ki naj bi podpirali refleksije učiteljev, so vabljeni, da kritično razmislijo o tem, kako podpreti okolje, ki spodbuja trajnostno in transformativno učenje. Raziskovalni pristop k strokovnemu izpopolnjevanju bi učiteljem omogočil skupno odkrivanje in ustvarjanje (transformacijo znanja) namesto prenosa obstoječega znanja (transmisija znanja). Rezultati raziskave so prispevek in spodbuda za spremembe v praksi šolskega kurikula ter spodbuda znanstvenikom za nadaljnje raziskovanje na tem področju.*

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